

September 26, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
House Majority Leader
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Leader Jeffries, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader Scalise:

SmarterSafer is a national [coalition](#) made up of a diverse chorus of voices who champion environmentally responsible and fiscally sound approaches to natural catastrophe mitigation and the promotion of public safety. The coalition focuses on several policy areas, including flood and wildfire risk, extreme heat, infrastructure investment, environmental protection and conservation, and overall responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. We write you today to urge the Congress to avert the looming lapse of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The NFIP, set to expire on September 30th, plays a crucial role in protecting homeowners, businesses, and communities across the nation from the devastating financial impacts associated with flooding. With the increasing frequency and severity of weather-related disasters, such as hurricanes, storms, and prolonged rainfall events, the need for a reliable flood insurance program has never been more apparent. That is particularly true as coastal communities across the United States remain meaningfully exposed during this hurricane season. Allowing the NFIP to expire would not only expose millions of Americans to severe financial risks but also disrupt the real estate market, hinder economic growth, and place undue burdens on already strained state and local budgets.

While we recognize that a short-term extension is important to prevent an immediate lapse in coverage, we also encourage both chambers to look beyond temporary fixes and work towards a comprehensive, long-term reauthorization and reform of the NFIP. An extended reauthorization should prioritize pre-disaster mitigation and resiliency efforts, transitioning the program from a purely reactive approach to a proactive one. This includes incentivizing and funding improved floodplain management and restoration, infrastructure improvements, and resilient practices to reduce the financial burden on taxpayers and lessen the impact of floods on communities.

Furthermore, we encourage Congress to implement risk-based pricing that accurately reflects the flood risks associated with a property, promoting fairness, encouraging risk reduction, and ensuring the program can better cover its costs without relying on additional taxpayer subsidies. While risk-based pricing should be a central discussion point in future negotiations, SmarterSafer also recognizes the affordability challenges associated with NFIP coverage. To that end, we look forward to conversations on means-tested affordable coverage, particularly in historically disadvantaged communities that in many cases face a much higher risk of flooding. Furthermore, accurate and modernized floodplain mapping is essential for informed decision-making. Congress should consider all efforts to enhance flood mapping efforts, making them more accessible and precise to help renters, homeowners, and broader communities better understand their flood risks.

Additionally, we continue to believe that fostering the growth of the private flood insurance market can complement the NFIP, improve consumer choice, and promote competition. Congress should also bear in mind the role that public/private partnerships, including the role of reinsurance coverage, can play in offsetting risks to taxpayers and the Federal balance sheet. It is crucial to ensure that the NFIP reflects the tenets of financial responsibility and actuarial soundness.

In the immediate term, a reauthorization of the NFIP is essential to protect the economic security of millions of Americans in the face of intensifying flood risk. We respectfully request your commitment to taking action to ensure the program's continued operation and long-term improvement.

The SmarterSafer Coalition stands ready to work collaboratively with you and your colleagues to achieve these goals and enhance the NFIP for the benefit of all Americans. Thank you for your dedication to the safety and well-being of our communities.

Sincerely,

The SmarterSafer Coalition

cc The Honorable Patrick McHenry
 The Honorable Maxine Waters
 The Honorable Sherrod Brown
 The Honorable Tim Scott

MEMBERS

Environmental Organizations
American Rivers
Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES)
ConservAmerica
Defenders of Wildlife
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
The Nature Conservancy

Surfrider Foundation

Consumer and Taxpayer Advocates

Coalition to Reduce Spending
National Taxpayers Union
R Street Institute
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

Insurer and Reinsurer Interests

American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA)
Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers (ABIR)
Chubb
Liberty Mutual Group
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)
National Flood Association
Reinsurance Association of America
Swiss Re
USAA

Mitigation Interests

Natural Hazard Mitigation Association

Housing

Habitat for Humanity
National Housing Conference
National Leased Housing Association

ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS

Allianz of America
American Conservation Coalition
American Consumer Institute
Center for Clean Air Policy
CoreLogic
Friends of the Earth
Institute for Liberty
Zurich North America